

ASSOCIATE PLANNER

DEFINITION

Under general supervision, administers complex current and advance planning activities, including serving as project manager for complex development applications and special projects; administers specified activities in such areas as zoning, advance planning, and environmental impact studies, protection, and compliance, as well as the Capital Improvement Program (CIP); provides information and assistance to property owners, developers, contractors, and the public; provides complex professional assistance to the Director of Community Development, City Council, Planning Commission, and others in areas of expertise; oversees, reviews, and performs a variety of studies and prepares and presents staff reports; and performs related work as required.

SUPERVISION RECEIVED AND EXERCISED

Receives general supervision from the Director of Community Development. Exercises no direct supervision over staff.

CLASS CHARACTERISTICS

This is the full journey-level class in the professional planning series. Incumbents are expected to perform the full range of professional and technical planning work in all of the following areas: current, advance, and/or environmental planning activities and daily departmental operations, in addition to providing project management and administration. Positions at this level are distinguished from the Assistant level by the performance of the full range of duties as assigned, working more independently, and exercising a higher level of judgment and initiative. Positions at this level receive only occasional instruction or assistance as new or unusual situations arise and are fully aware of the operating procedures and policies of the work unit. This class is distinguished from the Director of Community Development in that the latter has overall responsibility for all functions of the department and for developing, implementing, and interpreting public policy.

EXAMPLES OF ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONS (Illustrative Only)

Management reserves the right to add, modify, change, or rescind the work assignments of different positions and to make reasonable accommodations so that qualified employees can perform the essential functions of the job.

- Serves as project manager for complex current and/or long-range planning projects and special planning studies, including in-depth application and plan review, coordination with applicants to obtain additional information and project changes, preparing legal notices, posting notices on sites, background research, preparing staff reports, attending public hearings and making presentations, monitoring implementation measures and conditions of approval, checking submittals for building plan check, and inspecting development and capital improvement sites at the beginning and upon completion of the project; reviews project applications and plans submitted for Historic Landmarks Board, Planning Commission, and City Council considerations at public hearings.
- Interprets and applies Federal, State, and local laws, rules, and regulations to ensure that public and private projects are in compliance, including the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), Subdivision Map Act, Public Resource Code, General Plan, Specific Plans, Design Specifications, and Local Guidelines and procedures.

- Interacts and communicates with a variety of individuals and groups at the public service counter, in the field, over the telephone, at public hearings, and in discussion forums, including other City departments and public agencies, elected and appointed City officials, developers, consultants, architects, engineers, property owners, and the general public for the purpose of obtaining or providing information, coordinating activities, processing projects, negotiating plan changes, and formulating recommendations.
- Conducts site and policy background research to obtain information for the preparation of staff reports, correspondence, memoranda, policy documents, procedure documents, and presentations to management, inter-departmental staff, or governing bodies; reads, interprets, analyzes, and explains a wide variety of technical documents, studies, and practices.
- Researches, analyzes, and interprets social, economic, population, and land use data and trends; develops survey instruments to collect data; develops recommendations and prepares written reports on various planning matters and the City's General Plan.
- Conducts plan checks to ensure conformity to City regulations and special conditions attached to properties by City review agencies.
- Prepares and releases requests for proposals for technical consultant services; establishes selection criteria; evaluates proposals and conducts interviews in conformance with City policy; coordinates with and recommends needed contract management provisions and controls; manages and oversees technical consultants' work products to ensure adherence to City standards and legal provisions; ensures that deliverables are submitted on time and budget and that progress and payment requests are consistent with City policy and contract provisions.
- Coordinates project reviews by other City departments and outside agencies and consultants.
- Evaluates the conclusions of initial studies, mitigated negative declarations, environmental impact reports, and uses the evaluation to formulate a recommendation on projects; monitors project compliance with environmental document mitigation measures and conditions of approval.
- Participates in General Plan amendments and updates; participates in and makes recommendations regarding ordinance and policy development; observes, identifies, and responds to policy and procedure-related questions and concerns; communicates any observed deficiencies to management; participates in creating new policies and procedures as necessary.
- Represents the City and presents oral reports at public meetings and hearings as necessary.
- Provides staff support to the Housing Element Task Force, Historic Landmarks Board, and other assigned committees and commissions; prepares and presents agendas, minutes, staff reports, and resolutions; receives applications; conducts site inspections to determine project compliance; develops recommendations for approval or denial; provides recommendations to the Task Force, Board, and other assigned committees and commissions.
- Prepares and presents staff reports for the City Council, Planning Commission, Zoning Administrator, and various other committees and advisory boards as directed; prepares research, reports, maps, and conducts briefings and meetings.
- Serves as the City's Certified Local Government Coordinator.
- Attends meetings, conferences, workshops, and training sessions; attends and participates in professional group meetings; stays abreast of new trends and innovations in the field of urban planning and other types of public services as they relate to the area of assignment.
- Attends and participates in professional groups and committees; provides technical and professional support to departmental management staff and other City departments and the public; advises other departments regarding planning and/or environmental review requirements, budgets, and timelines to facilitate adequate project planning.
- Assists in the development and administration of goals, objectives, policies, and procedures related to the department; drafts formalized ordinances, policies, and procedures.
- Represents and supervises the department in the absence of the Director.
- Performs other duties as assigned.

QUALIFICATIONS

Knowledge of:

- Modern and advanced principles and practices of technical and legal issues of urban and regional planning, zoning, urban economics, demographics, and environmental planning and program management.
- Geographic, socio-economic, transportation, political, and other elements related to city planning.
- Comprehensive plans and current planning processes and the development process.
- Site planning and architectural design principles.
- Operational characteristics, services, and activities of a comprehensive environmental planning program.
- Principles, practices, methods, and techniques of code violation investigation and compliance including citation issuance procedures, methods used to obtain various types of inspection warrants, and principles used to prepare legal documents.
- Applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, ordinances, and organizational policies and procedures relevant to assigned area of responsibility.
- Project management and contract administration principles and techniques.
- Researching and reporting methods, techniques, and procedures.
- Recent developments, current literature, and sources of information related to planning, zoning, and environmental review.
- Practices of researching planning and land use issues, evaluating alternatives, making sound recommendations, and preparing and presenting effective staff reports.
- Principles of advanced mathematics and their application to planning work.
- Modern office practices, methods, and computer equipment and applications related to the work.
- Methods and techniques of effective technical report preparation and presentation.
- English usage, grammar, spelling, vocabulary, and punctuation.
- Techniques for effectively representing the City in contacts with governmental agencies, community groups, various business, professional, educational and regulatory organizations, and with property owners, developers, contractors, and the public.
- Techniques for providing a high level of customer service by effectively dealing with the public, vendors, contractors, and City staff.

Ability to:

- Interpret complex planning and zoning programs to the general public; identify and respond to issues and concerns of the public, City Council, and other boards and commissions.
- Read plans and specifications and make effective site visits.
- Assess, monitor, and report environmental impact on and of various City programs, projects, and services.
- Analyze site design, terrain constraints, land use compatibility, utilities, and other urban services.
- Conduct routine research projects, evaluate alternatives, and make sound recommendations.
- Interpret, apply, explain, and ensure compliance with applicable Federal, State, and local laws, rules, regulations, policies, and procedures.
- Read and understand technical drawings and specifications.
- Perform mathematical and planning computations with precision.
- Effectively represent the department and the City in meetings with governmental agencies, community groups, and various business, professional, and regulatory organizations and individuals.
- Coordinate assigned activities with other City departments and agencies as required.
- Prepare and present clear, concise, and logical written and oral reports, correspondence, policies, procedures, and other written materials.
- Establish and maintain a variety of filing, record keeping, and tracking systems.

- Make sound, independent decisions within established policy and procedural guidelines.
- Organize and prioritize a variety of projects and multiple tasks in an effective and timely manner; organize own work, set priorities, and meet critical time deadlines.
- Operate modern office equipment including computer equipment and specialized software applications programs.
- Use English effectively to communicate in person, over the telephone, and in writing.
- Use tact, initiative, prudence, and independent judgment within general policy, procedural, and legal guidelines.
- Establish, maintain, and foster positive and effective working relationships with those contacted in the course of work.

Education and Experience:

Any combination of training and experience that would provide the required knowledge, skills, and abilities is qualifying. A typical way to obtain the required qualifications would be:

Equivalent to graduation from an accredited four-year college or university with major coursework in urban planning, community development, business or public administration, or a related field, and three (3) years of experience in planning, zoning, and related community development activities.

Licenses and Certifications:

- Possession of, or ability to obtain, a valid California Driver's License by time of appointment.

PHYSICAL DEMANDS

Must possess mobility to work in a standard office setting and use standard office equipment, including a computer, to inspect City development sites, to operate a motor vehicle, and to visit various City and meeting sites; vision to read printed materials and a computer screen; and hearing and speech to communicate in person, before groups, and over the telephone. This is primarily a sedentary office classification although standing in and walking between work areas may be required. Finger dexterity is needed to access, enter, and retrieve data using a computer keyboard or calculator and to operate standard office equipment. Positions in this classification occasionally bend, stoop, kneel, reach, push, and pull drawers open and closed to retrieve and file information. Employees must possess the ability to lift, carry, push, and pull materials and objects weighing up to 25 pounds.

ENVIRONMENTAL ELEMENTS

Employees work in an office environment with moderate noise levels, controlled temperature conditions, and no direct exposure to hazardous physical substances. Employees may work in the field and occasionally be exposed to loud noise levels, cold and hot temperatures, inclement weather conditions, road hazards, vibration, mechanical and/or electrical hazards, and hazardous physical substances and fumes. Employees may interact with upset staff and/or public and private representatives in interpreting and enforcing departmental policies and procedures.